

DID YOU KNOW?

The No Child Left Behind Act's definition of core academic subjects includes the arts.

In this respect, the arts were given equal billing with reading, math, science, and other disciplines. And this definition could lead to a huge improvement in national education policy. This means that whenever federal education programs (such as teacher training, school reform, and technology programs) are targeted to "core academic subjects," the arts may be eligible to receive funds.

It's the Law

The definition of core subjects in the new law is located in Title IX, Part A, Section 9101 (1)(D)(11), Definitions. The definition of core academic subjects is included in the glossary of the bill, which tells local and state education decision-makers how to interpret the concepts used throughout the Act. However, many decision-makers may not be aware that the arts are identified as a core subject in the Act and, as a result, may be unaware that many types of federal education funds may be used for arts education.



Arts Entertainment and Arts Education: The Differences

Entertainment involves casual engagement with any art form already known.

Exposure involves engagement structured to produce a new experience with an art.

Enrichment involves engagement or experience crafted to support another educational activity.

Education means engagement with an arts discipline as a body of knowledge and skills to be sequentially acquired and applied by the student.

While all four of these functions are important and while the first three are important elements of learning about the arts, *one function does not substitute for another*. When understood, using the definitions above, such efforts deserve support. However, when exposure, enrichment, or entertainment is presented as substantially equivalent to arts education, the cause of knowledge and skill development in students suffers. In addition, the arts disciplines lose their claim to parity as fundamental studies at the center of general education. We do not attempt to teach reading by taking students on tours of libraries.

Literacy for All

Without art study, large and important legacies of art and culture go unseen, unheard, unread, unstudied, and unlearned. Many of our children are being left behind. The surest way to create semilliterate graduates from American schools is to insure that many of the important artistic forms in which meaning is represented will be enigmas to our students—codes they cannot crack.

Literacy is far more than being able to read and write. Because meaning is the core of literacy, it is the ability to decode or encode in any of the forms through which meaning is conveyed.

What cannot be conveyed in words is often possible in the visual, auditory, choreographic or the literary—these ought to be primal educational aims.

Educational *equity* is provided to our young not simply by giving them access to our schools, but by providing programs that enable them to become fully literate once they pass through the schoolhouse door.

Visual learning represents a particular form of human achievement, one that includes our ability to notice what is visually subtle and to use it in ways that are personally or socially meaningful.